

## **County staff garner professional association awards**

By Hector Flores

I'm always thrilled to share news of my colleagues who have earned recognition from their peers in various professional and trade associations. Such awards are not only individual honors, but also reflect well on how committed your local government employees are to serving their fellow residents.

Our Public Works Director John Elias, who will accept a plaque recognizing his 35 years of service to Charlotte County on Tuesday, was recently honored by the Public Works Directors Roundtable as Public Works Director of the Year at the annual American Public Works Association Florida chapter conference in Daytona Beach.

John led his department to obtaining its first-ever APWA accreditation in 2023. The congratulatory comments in a Facebook post announcing his award were a testament to the respect he has built over his long career in public service.

The good news kept coming earlier this month when Charlotte County Community Development Department Deputy Building Official Jack McStravic was awarded the prestigious title of Gulf Coast Building Official of the Year for 2023 by the Gulf Coast Chapter of the Building Officials Association of Florida.

The Gulf Coast Chapter represents all jurisdictions within Charlotte, Lee, Collier, Glades, and Desoto counties, and their recognition of McStravic's exemplary contributions highlights his outstanding dedication to his profession and the community.

As deputy building official, McStravic played a crucial role in the region's recovery efforts following the devastating hurricanes Ian and Idalia. His leadership and expertise were instrumental in coordinating damage assessment efforts, ensuring a coordinated and efficient response to the challenges posed by the natural disasters.

Congratulations to John and Jack on their recognition.

### **Hurricane expo**

County emergency management staff will be on hand to answer questions and provide information to attendees of the 2024 Home and Hurricane Expo, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., May 18 at the Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor St., Punta Gorda. The event will also feature area television meteorologists who are on the front lines informing residents of emerging threats and ever-changing potential impact zones of approaching storms.

We're only three weeks away from the start of the 2024 hurricane season, which has been forecast to be one of the busiest on record. The expo is a great way to get critical preparation information, visit with home safety vendors and get in the storm-ready mindset. Admission and parking are free.

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